

What is claimed is:

1. A method for routing a call to an information assistance system which includes a server and a plurality of information assistance providers, the method comprising:
5 receiving by the server a first request for acceptance of the call;
in response to the first request, compiling a list of selected information assistance providers available to accept the call, the list being compiled based on measures of current conditions of the plurality of information assistance providers; and
responding by the server to the request with a message, the message including a subset of
10 the selected information assistance providers, thereby causing a second request for acceptance of the call to be sent to at least one of the selected information assistance providers in the subset.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein voice content of the call is formatted in
accordance with a voice over Internet protocol (VoIP).
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3. The method of claim 2 wherein the selected information assistance providers on
the list are represented by IP addresses assigned thereto.
4. The method of claim 2 wherein at least one of the first request, second request and
20 message is formatted in accordance with a session initiation protocol (SIP).
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the plurality of information assistance providers
include at least one operator.
- 25 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected information assistance providers on
the list are ranked according to their respective likelihoods of availability to accept the call.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein at least first and second ones of the information
assistance providers in the subset are ranked equally, the second request for acceptance of the
30 call being multicast to the first and second information assistance providers.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the subset of the selected information assistance providers comprises each one of the selected information assistance providers on the list .

5 9. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is a function of the number of callers hanging up communication calls in the system after a predetermined answer delay.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is a function of the number of communication calls being queued to be answered in the system.

10 11. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is a function of a duration of a communication call answered in the system.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is a function of the number of communication calls answered in the system in a given period.

15 13. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is a function of at least one of the number of information assistance providers and the number of operators attending to the communication calls in the system.

20 14. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is a function of wait time before a communication call is answered in the system.

25 15. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is a function of the number of communication calls rerouted to one of the information assistance providers from another information assistance provider.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is a function of the number of communication calls, each of which is answered in the system within a predetermined time limit.

30 17. The method of claim 1 wherein the communication call includes a telephone call.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein one of the measures is weighted relative to another measure.

19. A method for distributing communication calls among a plurality of receivers

5 handling the calls, the method comprising:

receiving from a device a first request for handling of a communication call;

in response to the first request, a server obtaining a list of receivers available to handle the communication call;

revising the list to at least include selected data therein; and

10 sending to the device a message responsive to the first request, the message including the revised list, the device sending a second request for handling of the communication call to the server based on the selected data in the revised list, thereby causing the server to obtain a second list of receivers available to handle the communication call.

15 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the selected data includes information concerning the server.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the information includes an address of the server to which the second request is sent.

20 22. The method of claim 19 wherein the selected data includes a condition under which the second request is sent to the server.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the condition relates to time.

25 24. The method of claim 19 wherein the communication call seeks information assistance, and the plurality of receivers include information assistance providers.

25. The method of claim 19 wherein voice content of the communication call is
30 formatted in accordance with a VoIP.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the receivers on the list are represented by IP addresses assigned thereto.

27. The method of claim 25 wherein at least one of the first request, second request
5 and message is formatted in accordance with a SIP.

28. The method of claim 19 wherein the receivers on the list are ranked according to their respective likelihoods of availability to handle the communication call.

10 29. A system for processing an information assistance call, comprising:
a plurality of information assistance providers;
a server for receiving a first request for acceptance of the call; and
a processor for compiling a list of selected information assistance providers available to
accept the call, the list being compiled based on measures of current conditions of the plurality of
15 information assistance providers, the server responding to the first request with a message, the
message including a subset of the selected information assistance providers, thereby causing the
a second request for acceptance of the call to be sent to at least one of the selected information
assistance providers in the subset.

20 30. The system of claim 29 wherein voice content of the call is formatted in
accordance with a VoIP.

25 31. The system of claim 30 wherein the selected information assistance providers on
the list are represented by IP addresses assigned thereto.

32. The system of claim 30 wherein at least one of the first request, second request,
and message is formatted in accordance with a SIP.

30 33. The system of claim 29 wherein the plurality of information assistance providers
include at least one operator.

34. The system of claim 29 wherein the selected information assistance providers on the list are ranked according to their respective likelihoods of availability to accept the call.

35. The system of claim 34 wherein at least first and second ones of the information assistance providers in the subset are ranked equally, the second request being multicast to the first and second information assistance providers.

36. The system of claim 29 wherein the subset of the selected information assistance providers comprises each one of the selected information assistance providers on the list .

37. A system for distributing communication calls among a plurality of receivers handling the calls, the system comprising:

an interface for receiving, from a device, a first request for handling of a communication call; and

a server, responsive to the first request, for obtaining a list of receivers available to handle the communication call, the list being revised to at least include selected data therein, the server sending to the device a message responsive to the first request, the message including the revised list, the device sending a second request for handling of the communication call to the server based on the selected data in the revised list, thereby causing the server to obtain a second list of receivers available to handle the communication call.

38. The system of claim 37 wherein the selected data includes information concerning the server.

39. The system of claim 38 wherein the information includes an address of the server to which the second request is sent.

40. The system of claim 37 wherein the selected data includes a condition under which the second request is sent to the server.

41. The system of claim 40 wherein the condition relates to time.

42. The system of claim 37 wherein the communication call seeks information assistance, and the plurality of receivers include information assistance providers.

5 43. The system of claim 37 wherein voice content of the communication call is formatted in accordance with a VoIP.

44. The system of claim 43 wherein the receivers on the list are represented by IP addresses assigned thereto.

10 45. The system of claim 43 wherein the first request, the second request and the message are formatted in accordance with a SIP.

15 46. The system of claim 37 wherein the receivers on the list are ranked according to their respective likelihoods of availability to handle the communication call.

47. The system of claim 37 wherein the device includes a switching device.